

Trade Notes...

FAS public affairs specialist
Don Washington is at (202) 720-3101;
E-mail: washington@fas.usda.gov

Asia Remains Major Market for U.S. French Fry Exports

During the past 10 years, U.S. frozen french fry exports have consistently increased, particularly to some East Asian countries, where the number of quick service restaurants has expanded significantly. The outlook for U.S. frozen potato french fry exports remains positive as foreign demand continues to expand. In marketing year 2000/01, U.S. frozen potato french fry exports set new records at 497,000 metric tons, valued at \$354 million. East Asian countries accounted for more than 80 percent of U.S. fry exports. Japan alone consumed about 44 percent of U.S. fry shipments, followed by China/Hong Kong, South Korea, Mexico and Taiwan. Expansion of the international fast food industry, product quality, rising incomes, tariff reductions and ongoing market development activities should continue to propel demand for U.S. potato fries.

U.S. Lettuce Exporters See Green

Negotiations between USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) may result in a pilot pre-clearance program for U.S. lettuce. MAFF plant health officials could come to the United States, possibly as early as fall 2002, to help set up a pre-export clearance system of fresh lettuce exports to Japan. A large percentage of U.S. lettuce exports has been fumigated in Japan for aphids, thrips and leaf miners. This procedure damaged the quality and reduced the shelf life of the lettuce. U.S. exporters hope that a pre-clearance program in the United States will lessen the risk associated with exporting to Japan and potentially boost sales. In fiscal 2001, U.S. exports of lettuce to Japan were valued at \$9.2 million, up 42 percent from the previous year.

Fruit Logistica 2002 Hits the Sweet Spot Again

For the first time in its 10-year history, the Fruit Logistica show, held in Berlin, Germany in January 2002, attracted more exhibitors than the annual show of the U.S.-based Produce Marketing Association. Over 810 exhibitors from 50 countries, including nine companies and associations from the United States, participated in the fruit and vegetable trade show. Fruit Logistica continues to be an important meeting point for over 13,000 key European fruit and vegetable buyers. U.S. products featured included pears, cranberries, table grapes, walnuts, almonds, pistachios and sweet corn.

FAS Updates Guide to Exporting Solid Wood Products

FAS has published a revised edition of "A Guide to Exporting Solid Wood Products" to assist U.S. firms. The guide helps U.S. wood products producers examine and prepare for export markets by providing them with a brief overview of the necessary steps in developing a successful export marketing strategy. World exports in solid wood products continue to rise steadily and surpassed \$60 billion for the first time in 1999. You can obtain a free copy of the guide by sending a request to USDA, FAS, Forest and Fishery Products Division, AgSTOP 1047, Washington, DC, 20250-1047, or by calling (202) 720-0638. Copies of the guide (designated as Agricultural Handbook No. 662, January 2002) can also be purchased from the National Technical Information Service (Tel.: (703) 605-6060).